

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending. Claims 1, 7, 11, 13 and 17 have been amended. The specification has been carefully amended as to the matters of form kindly pointed out in the Office Action. Claims 1, 7 and 13 are the only independent claims.

New drawings are submitted herewith that reflect the changes required in the Office Action. No new matter has been added. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is requested.

The specification was objected to due to certain informalities. As shown above, the specification has been amended in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 5, 11 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. The claims have been amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention to the points raised in the Office Action, and without narrowing those claims. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,570,355 (Dail et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Miyabe et al. (JP10-242981A). Claims 7-10, 12-16, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious from Dail et al. in view Umeuchi et al. (JP9-2144459A) and further in view of Miyabe et al. Applicant submits that the amended independent claims are patentable over the cited references for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to a timeslot assignment method for a communication system in which a plurality of end-user systems are connected to a timeslot assignment unit via a

common transmission medium. Each of the end-user systems includes a buffer for storing packets of either variable or constant length and forwarding packets from the buffer on assigned timeslots. The method includes the steps of: determining a first count number of the packets in the buffer of each of the end-user systems; determining a second, total count number of timeslots previously assigned to each end-user system during a delay time period of the timeslot assignment unit; using the first and second count numbers for determining a third count number of packets in the buffer to which timeslots are still not assigned; and assigning timeslots to packets of each end-user system based on an order or rank of third count numbers of respective ones of the plurality of end-user systems.

Among the features not taught or suggested in the cited references is the assigning of timeslots to packets of each end-user system based on an order or rank of third count numbers of respective ones of the plurality of end-user systems.

In a disclosed embodiment, timeslots are assigned by using third count numbers of the plurality of end-user systems, based on a ranking of third count numbers of the systems. For example, in one embodiment, timeslots are assigned corresponding to a difference between third count numbers arranged in descending order of rank, as recited, for example, in Claim 5.

Dail et al. shows that extra bandwidth may be proportionately allocated in accordance with extra bandwidth requests originally made by each of the existing ATM/VBR calls. However, no teaching has been found in Dail et al. of determining a third count number of packets in the buffer to which timeslots are still not assigned and assigning timeslots to packets of each end-user system based on an order or rank of third count numbers of respective ones of the plurality of end-user systems, as in claim 1. Miyabe et al. fails to remedy this deficiency of Dail et al. as a reference against claim 1.

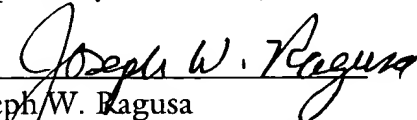
The other independent claims recite a substantially similar feature and are believed patentable for substantially similar reasons.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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